

A Conversation With Randy Feola

By Judith Epstein

It was a contemplative and reserved Randolph Feola, Jr. the **Mariner** interviewed last week. Feola sat in the kitchen of his Hull home drinking hot tea to allay the effects of the muggy afternoon.

Cinnamon, his doberman pinscher, and Rowdy, a German shepard pup — Feola's only housemates — yipped outside the screen door, wanting to be included.

Feola hadn't always been interested in police work, he said. Approximately 10 years ago, when he was working at Quincy Shipyard, the suggestion of his father, Police Chief Randolph Feola, to pursue a police career finally was driven home to him.

"I knew it was hard," Feola said of being a policeman and of having grown up the son of a controversial police officer. "I remembered what it was like in a small town. I knew it was hard, my father being a policeman. I knew of the difficulties of my own kids," he added, should he have his own family one day.

It's not the case anymore. In the 60's and 70's it wasn't a serious factor," he said, when he made the decision to become a policeman.

He took the police exam in May 1969 and was appointed a temporary intermittent in September of that year. He worked vacation coverage and an occasional detail until he was appointed a permanent intermittent in March 1970. He has worked full time ever since. After completing the Brockton Police Academy he was appointed a full time patrolman in May 1970.

"After I got on the force and saw what it was all about — working helping people, getting inner satisfaction and not just a check on Thursday, I decided I liked it," Feola said. "I didn't come on like gangbusters or with any ideas of changing the world. I formed my attitudes about it as I learned."

Feola's first full time shift was the midnight to 8 a.m., on the third or graveyard shift. "It was rough at first. Whoever I was riding with would drop me off at Cushing Plaza where I would check every door by hand. After a break I would be dropped off in the Common and hand check every door." Feola felt that these duties were necessary and should still be practiced with diligence today; however, he questioned the real reason he was expected to perform them.

He suggested that perhaps he was just being broken in as a rookie cop, or that possibly he was being kept out of the way so that he couldn't report to his father about any slack-off of duties at headquarters and elsewhere in town. The suspicion of Feola having a direct tattle-tale line to the Chief was always present, he said.



Randy Feola

"I used to go at it eight hours a day, whatever it was — answering class, checking speeders," he said. In those early days he usually was a passenger in a patrol car and rode with Sgt. John Rhodes, Clifton Jones, and David Moir. Lt. Charles Stockbridge was their sergeant in command of the third shift.

"I liked the work," Feola said further qualifying his career decision. "I liked being out on the street, talking to people. I thought I'd like to stay. I didn't have any thought of not being there, but things have a way of changing."

The way of changing Feola alluded to didn't happen over night. Although he claimed he kept with him always the notion that he wanted to keep people out of trouble rather than catch them in trouble, Feola started to feel more acutely the suspicion and antagonism rising toward him.

"Everybody can't be close with everybody. There was a lack of total acceptance with everyone I wanted to be friends with, though. It could have been part of what led me to seek more friends on the outside of the department."

"No one ever said anything to me personally," he said, of the negative factions he felt mounting within the department, although he indicated that he got along well with most of the officers. "It came back to me pretty quick, and let me know a certain faction didn't like me." Feola guessed that is was his lifestyle, his

father, perhaps even his intelligence that earned him resentment.

"Every professional social group has its cliques. The Cohasset Police Department is like any other group that has its own internal factions. The majority I get along with, both on and off duty."

As far as he knew, Feola said that there had never been a complaint about him while he was on duty.

In 1972 Feola was switched to the second shift, 4 p.m. to midnight, the time he currently works. "I always liked it better; it was more regular. There's more time to see friends after work." When asked if that also meant there was more time to socialize with friends at drinking establishments, Feola made it clear that he didn't wish to discuss bars.

"Drinking to me is the result of other things. I hate to label it as a problem. It's not the case that if that were eliminated, everything would be perfect," he said. When asked what it would take to make things right he responded, "What it would take? I guess everybody is looking for that."

"What would probably help me is a whole new set of priorities, becoming what you care about, trying to figure out what you've thought about in the past and what's best for you in the future. Sometimes a few traumatic experiences can force you to reassess," he said.

Concerning the recent charges pending court action and all the publicity they have received, Feola said, "I know that those who have had confidence, trust and concerns for me, I may have let them down. I'd rather have 7000 people judge me on all facts than have a few people judge me on a few facts," he said.

As for the motor vehicle violations, in particular, Feola noted, "It could happen to anybody. The biggest point of availability to make a mistake is on the road in a public place. It's where they're the most susceptible, whether somebody hits them, they hit somebody or stop on the side of the road trying to help somebody."

"If the pending situations can be cleared up I know I'm still capable of giving the kind of concern and doing the kind of work I've done in the past."

"When you're in the public eye, you are subject to a lot more criticism and observation than others. There are a lot of accusations but no one can say they saw me do anything. I'm not being judged as Randy Feola, but as the guy who could use a haircut, the guy who stops at the Red Lion, the guy who doesn't have the image he's supposed to have for the position he holds."

NEWS OF HOME

Cohasset Mariner

has Cohasset News
for Cohasset People

Subscribe to the
Cohasset Mariner
for only
\$8.00 per year.



Send Coupon & Payment or Call
837-3500 or 383-6321

Name _____
Address _____

Cohasset Mariner
Box 71
22 Elm Street
Cohasset, Mass. 02025